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Governor Blagojevich Announces Continued Growth of Illinois Film and Television Industry

***Illinois Film Office Releases Blockbuster Lineup of Movies and Television
Projects Shooting in Illinois Bringing 5,000 Jobs and \$68 Million to State's
Economy***

CHICAGO – Expanding on the success of the Illinois film industry in 2004, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today announced the continued revitalization of movie and television production within the state and introduced an impressive lineup of movies that are scheduled to be filmed in the state in the coming months. The major motion pictures come from a cross-section of Hollywood's studios and feature popular talent, including Sandra Bullock, Keanu Reeves, Dustin Hoffman, Will Ferrell and Jennifer Aniston. Illinois' own acting and directing stars Vince Vaughn and John Malkovich play key roles in several of the productions. These exciting projects are estimated to create 5,000 jobs and inject \$68 million into the state's economy. In 2004, projects filmed throughout the state created nearly 15,000 jobs and generated \$77 million, 200 percent higher than in 2003.

"Our film industry has gone from bust to boom in the past two years – bringing thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in revenue for our economy. Again and again, we have proven that our state has the talent pool, the settings and the resources needed for blockbuster films, and this continued growth reinforces what we already know: Illinois is a great place for Hollywood to do business," Gov. Blagojevich said.

Illinois' film industry was in deep decline up until two years ago when the Governor signed Senate Bill 785, which made the state more competitive with other filming locations across the nation and around the world. The law provides a tax credit equal to 25 percent of the wages paid to Illinois residents working on television and film projects shot in Illinois. Just last week, the General Assembly passed legislation extending the film tax credit legislation for another year, with provisions making the credit easier to use and to encourage the hiring of Illinois workers from high unemployment areas. The Governor will sign the Senate Bill 1965 into law, which was sponsored by State Senator Rickey Hendon and State Rep. Ken Dunkin.

"Gov. Blagojevich and I are so pleased to see this important industry prospering in Illinois. By partnering with Hollywood's finest studios, we

are creating thousands of jobs and pumping millions of dollars into our economy,” State Senator Hendon (D-Chicago) said.

This is another strong indication that Illinois is once again attracting these incredibly diverse productions that are providing a critical economic boost. Gov. Blagojevich and I will continue working with the studios to make sure this year is an even better year than 2004,” State Rep. Dunkin (D-Chicago) said.

“The film industry is a very competitive business, and Gov. Blagojevich knows that we must continue to provide an attractive environment to keep these studios coming back. Film and television production brings so much to the table in terms of spurring economic development and job creation because thousands and thousands of people benefit when these studios do business in our state,” Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin said.

“Illinois has such strong talent and we can keep them working, in front of the camera and behind the scenes, as the Illinois Film Office continues to foster relationships in Hollywood to rebuild the Illinois film industry. Thanks to Gov. Blagojevich’s support, we’ve come a long way, but we must continue to support the film industry to keep these studios coming back to Illinois,” said Brenda Sexton, Managing Director of the Illinois Film Office.

Movie and television projects currently filming or scheduled to film in Illinois include:

Illinois’ first television series in five years, *Prison Break*, is a FOX Television series with Brett Ratner serving as its executive producer. Dominic Purcell will play a death row inmate who professes his innocence and his engineer brother, Wentworth Miller, will get placed in the prison to orchestrate a plan to help him escape. The series charts the prison break over the course of a season. Production is scheduled to begin this month at the Joliet Correctional Center, with airing expected in late August. The *Prison Break* pilot was filmed in Illinois in December.

Warner Bros. Studio’s *Il Mare* is directed by Alejandro Agresti and produced by Doug Davison and Roy Lee. This romantic drama is being filmed in and around Chicago and stars Keanu Reeves, Sandra Bullock, John Dylan Walsh, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Ebon Moss-Bachrach, Lynn Collins, Willeke van Ammelrooy and Christopher Plummer. Production started in mid-March.

Mandate Pictures is filming *Stranger Than Fiction* with a full cast of talent, including Will Ferrell, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman, Queen Latifah and Emma Thompson. Ferrell plays an agent for the IRS who finds himself the subject of narration that only he can hear. The narration begins to deeply affect everything from his work to his love life. Chicago Theatre School at DePaul University alumnus Zach Helm wrote the script and Marc Forster is directing the film.

The Break-Up is a romantic comedy starring Vince Vaughn and Jennifer Aniston under the direction of Peyton Reed. The writers are Jeremy Garelick, Jay Lavender and Vince Vaughn, with Vaughn also producing the movie. Filming is scheduled to begin this month.

Magnificent Mile Productions, Ltd. producers Anthony and Joseph Tomaska and John Malkovich with co-production partner Paris Mudd began filming *Drunk Boat* in late May. The Tomaskas (producers of *TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING* and owners of the Chicago Center For The Performing Arts) and Malkovich (who also stars in the film with John Goodman) have several other projects planned to shoot in Chicago. Robert Meyer, a native of Morton Grove and alumnus of Southern Illinois University, is directing the film.

You Are Going to Prison, a comedy based on the book of the same name, is produced by Prison Pictures, LLC and directed by Bob Odenkirk. The movie was shot in the Joliet Correctional Center and stars Will Arnett and Dax Shepard.